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A History of the Proctor Y.M.C.A. and the Sutherland Club



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The Proctor Y.M.C.A. in its early years. Later it was known as the Sutherland Club.

About the Author

Mary Fregosi is a retired educator who lives in Proctor. Her study of the Vermont Marble Company Strike of 1935-1936 appeared as the subject of the 2002 fall issue of the *Quarterly* (Vol. 32 No. 3). Mary is a Proctor native and has been intrigued by many of the pieces of Proctor's rich history. The Society is indebted to her for not only her wonderful research but also for her willingness to allow the publication of her most excellent work. This brief history was first written in 1974 as part of the requirement for a history course at the University of Vermont. In the fall of 2002 the author reread the paper and decided to investigate its final years in more depth. The original was revised to include this new information.

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A History of the Proctor Y.M.C.A. and the Sutherland Club

By Mary H. Fregosi

On a brisk November evening in 1902, 75 men of the town of Proctor assembled at the Odd Fellows' Hall. They had come to hear a Vermont Marble Company representative, Mr. Fletcher D. Proctor, describe the building being erected by his company in the center of the town. The group listened intently as Mr. Proctor explained the purpose of the building that the company had begun in October of that same year and its affiliation with the Young Men's Christian Association.¹ The individuals present at this meeting heartily endorsed the company's action and agreed to select a committee to draw up a constitution for a Proctor Y.M.C.A. The committee was composed of Frank C. Partridge, Angelo C. Freeborn, Guy H. Boyce, Claude I. Hunter, George Z. Thompson, John S. Olsen and John P. Marsh.²

Within a few weeks the committee concluded its project and presented its constitution at a meeting held in December of 1902. The preamble, in part, read: "We, the subscribers, interested in the spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical welfare of the men of Proctor and vicinity and impressed with the importance of concentrated effort to this end do hereby form an association..."³ The committee's diligent work was approved and a new experiment was underway in the tiny hamlet.

There were two classes of membership in the association, active and associate. An active member was one who was a member of an evangelical church. An associate member was one who did not belong to an evangelical church but who was of good moral fiber and who was either a resident of Proctor or its vicinity or was employed by the Vermont Marble Company.⁴ Later, the Board of Directors agreed to allow Catholics the privileges of the building without being members of the association if they paid the regular membership fee.⁵ This decision was an important step because there was a significant Catholic population in Proctor at the beginning of the 20th Century.

After the committee had organized the association it began a search for a general secretary who would oversee the entire operation. After much deliberation the committee hired J. E. Baldrige of Cincinnati, Ohio, at a salary of \$1,000 per year.⁶

The Proctor Y.M.C.A. was to be one of the first such associations in the country affiliated with an industry. It was an exciting idea and one that the company felt would cement the tie between labor and

management. The State Commission of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Vermont noted the significance of this new industrial alliance. "...One of the most striking things is the cosmopolitan character of the membership. It is composed of employers, foremen, office men, and laborers... It will help to solve the labor problem, will insure a better quality of work and will develop a higher type of manhood...."⁷

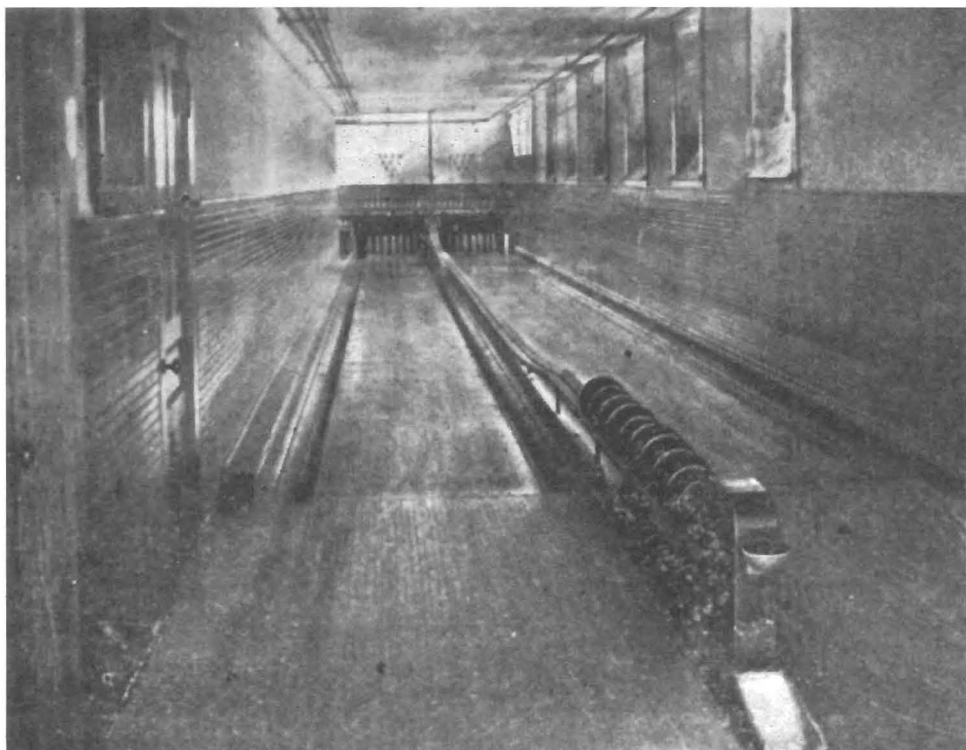
The boarding house site was chosen because of its proximity to the company store, train station, library and the Vermont Marble Company plant.⁸ The building was erected and furnished at a cost of \$36,000 and was ready for occupancy in mid-February 1903.⁹ From 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. on 14 February 1903, the association held an open house for all Proctor residents sixteen years of age or over. The reception was well attended and the 800 to 1000 people who were ushered through the building must have been duly impressed with the physical plant.¹⁰

In the basement was a game room with two pool tables and other games, two regulation bowling alleys and a locker room. There also were marble toilets, showers and sponge and tub baths. On the ground floor were two reading rooms supplied with several newspapers and magazines, a parlor, writing tables, an office for the general secretary, and a gym that was 50 X 30 feet in size. Three classrooms and a



PROCTOR Y.M.C.A. BROCHURE 1906-1907

The pool room with its two pool tables in 1906.



The two bowling alleys which saw extensive use in 1905-1906.

kitchen occupied the first floor and four dormitories and a bathroom were on the top floor.¹¹

After the Proctorians had been ushered through the building they listened to Brehmer's Orchestra and treated themselves to free coffee, sandwiches and sweets.¹² Without doubt the designer of the building, Mr. Arthur C. Rockwell,¹³ an architect for the Vermont Marble Company, received many compliments that evening on his fine work.

The following day the association opened its doors for membership. Invitations to join the organization had been printed in three languages and it is recorded that 100 men became members in the first hour the building was open. In the first month of the association's existence, 340 members joined.¹⁴ In the first year a total of 416 men joined the Proctor Y.M.C.A. They were representative of ten religious denominations and 16 nationalities that included "American, Bohemian, English, Finlander, French, German, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Jewish, Norwegian, Polander, Scotch, Slavish, Swedish, and Welsh."¹⁵

Immediately the Y.M.C.A. became the social center for the young men of the town. True to the preamble of its constitution, the Proctor "Y" began to attend to the spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical

welfare of its young men. The education committee was hard at work to provide courses to meet the needs of the community. There were many foreigners in town who knew no English. The association organized classes to assist people in the mastery of the language. In its first year the association offered an elementary English course for Swedes, one for Italians, and one for Hungarians, plus another basic English class open to all other nationalities. It also offered an advanced course open to all which included the study of the dictionary, the critical study of American authors and a great deal of outside reading. The fee for any of these courses was only one dollar.¹⁶

Since this project was an adventure between management and labor, certain courses were organized to assist the company in procuring competent workers for its many plants. A course in architectural drawing included the reading of plans and their layout plus elevations, methods of construction, the making of work patterns, and free hand drawing and lettering. The free hand drawing and lettering were particularly adapted for cutters, tracers, and letterers and could be taken separately.¹⁷

Mechanical drawing was another class given by the association. In this course the individual learned the use of instruments and got acquainted with simple geometric solids, sections, conventional lines, dimensions, intersections of surfaces, shade lines, inking and blue-printing. Both drawing courses could be taken for a two-dollar fee.¹⁸ These classes must have directly benefited the Vermont Marble Company as the instructors trained potential office employees.

The education committee must have been extremely busy during that first year because it also offered courses in electricity, arithmetic, surveying, penmanship, business practice and German. It was fortunate that the majority of teachers could be found among the residents of Proctor.¹⁹

In all, 137 people completed a course during the first year of the association. The breakdown follows:²⁰

English for Swedes	37	Mechanical Drawing	12
English for Hungarians	23	Free Hand Drawing	17
Penmanship	18	Electricity	6
Architectural Drawing	18	German	6

The education committee also sponsored a series of lectures as a part of the lecture and entertainment class. The first series of lectures was quite impressive and appealed to a wide range of interests. "The Capture of Aguinaldo" by Lieut. O.P.M. Hazzard kicked off the series followed by Mr. Julius S. Lane from Boston who spoke on "Diamond

and Gold Fields of South Africa". Other lectures included "Mining Experiences", "The Winning of a Continent" and "Life and Customs in China". This series lasted from November until the middle of March.²¹

The entertainment part of the lecture and entertainment class was equally as interesting. Individual reserved seats and general admission tickets were sold for the series. The 1903-1904 Season included the Chicago Glee Club, the Thespian Dramatic Company, the Ernest Gamble Concert Company and the Slayton Jubilee Singers.²²

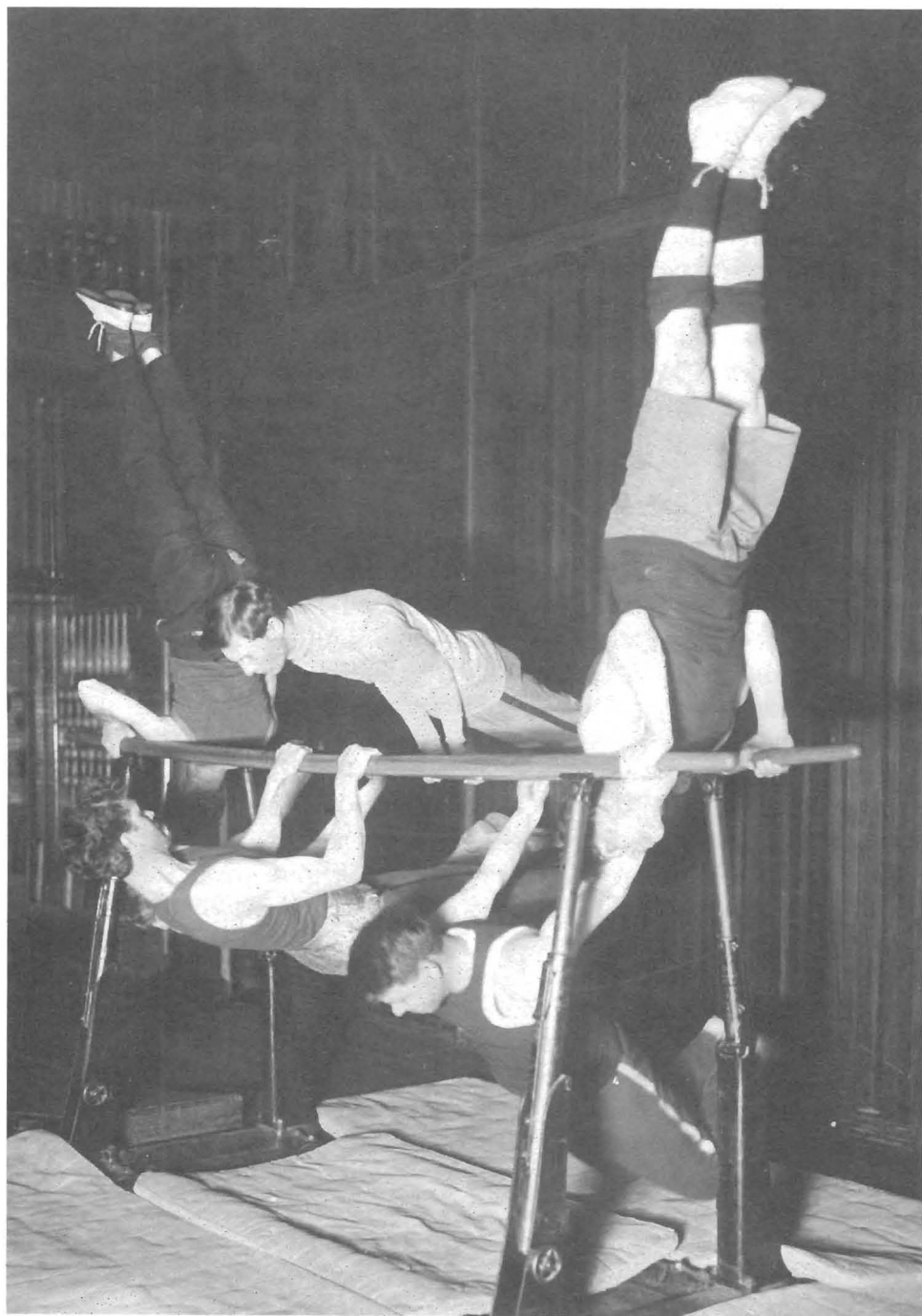
Along with educational and cultural uplifting, the young men of the association were given the opportunity to develop their bodies as well as their minds. Throughout the "Y"'s history in Proctor the physical education area was the most vital segment of its operation. Eighty-five members subscribed to the gym classes along with 15 high school boys and 35 grammar school lads. On 21 April 1903, a little over a month since its inception, the association presented a gym exhibition to 300 people.²³

At the end of one year the Board of Directors had every right to be pleased with its work. Membership was high and many of the members frequented the association on a regular basis. A popular part of the "Y"'s services related to physical hygiene. The majority of Proctor homes, many owned by the company, contained no baths so young men used the association's facilities for a nominal fee of 25 cents which included soap and towel. An average of 30 men per day used the bath and shower facilities in its first year.²⁴

Financially the association closed its books in January 1904 with a balance of \$72.98. The Vermont Marble Company contributed \$1700 to the association in its first year. Because of the Company's subsidy the Proctor Y.M.C.A. was able to spend \$8.00 per man while membership had cost only \$2.00 per member. Through the years, the Company's contributions, which at times amounted to 200% of the association's receipts, allowed membership to be set at a low fee.²⁵

Since membership at a Y.M.C.A. was confined to males the female populace of Proctor began to investigate the possibilities of becoming a part of the association. In March of 1903 it was voted by the Board of Directors to admit all ladies of Proctor and vicinity, seventeen and over, for physical exercise in the gym two mornings a week. Young girls between the ages of fourteen and seventeen could enjoy the same privileges on Saturday mornings.²⁶

The ladies, however, pushed for further privileges. In the winter of 1904 they petitioned the Board of Directors to allow them to attend basketball games. The Directors, however, voted to allow them admittance to only one game during the winter season.²⁷ Nonetheless, the women did not cease petitioning the Board for other privileges. In June



Five young men demonstrate the use of the gymnastic equipment.

of 1905, the ladies received permission to use the tennis court and croquet ground in the afternoon, but only if the facilities were not occupied.²⁸

The women persisted and the following year sought bowling privileges one or two days a week. Unfortunately, the President of the Board of Directors was instructed to inform the ladies that no special arrangement could be granted but the Board would attempt to arrange more open nights.²⁹ Despite its neglect of the women in the town the association met the needs of many young men in several areas. The successful first year provided a sound foundation for the Proctor Y.M.C.A. In the next few years the association expanded its work in many fields. It offered courses in American history and civics, first aid, banjo, mandolin, and guitar.³⁰ Whenever students applied in the education courses they were able to take the International Examination arranged under the direction of the International Committee of New York. The purpose of these exams was to provide some type of accountability and to maintain high standards in each course.³¹

The Y.M.C.A. printed small pamphlets that outlined the activities of the coming season and also reported on the previous year's events. The association announced new English classes in three different languages: Magar Esti Iscola (Hungarian), Svenska Klassen (Swedish), and Lezioni d'inglese (Italian). The Italian translation of the course description reads: "From studies made we conclude that few Italians know how to speak English and those few who do, barely speak it. All men who intend to stay in America would find it better and would be happier if they were able to converse with other men, read American newspapers, and be aware of things that are happening."³²

In one of the classes in elementary English given in 1913, the teacher was Charles Pulay, a Hungarian. He had arrived in Proctor in late 1909 not knowing a word of English. By 1913 he had grown sufficiently competent to instruct a class for his fellow countrymen. He also brought 25 new members into the association, each application being accompanied by cash from the newly registered Hungarians.³³

In addition to the educational courses, the Proctor "Y" still held its lecture series although fewer lectures were presented. For example, in 1905-1906 only two lectures were given, one of which was entitled "The Battle of Gettysburg" and presented by the illustrious Civil War veteran and Indian fighter, General O.O. Howard of Burlington, Vermont.³⁴

The reading room provided an education for many. There, young immigrant men could practice their English by reading magazines and newspapers. These same foreigners also could keep in contact with their mother country by reading many of the foreign newspapers

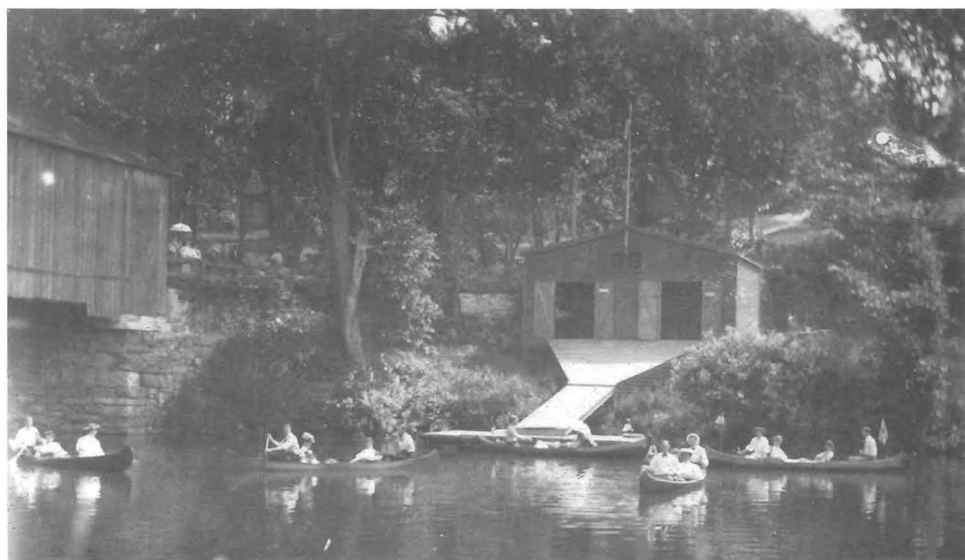
which included: *Gazetta Polska*, *Il Secolo*, *Aftonbladet*, *Svea*, *Allers Familji-Jorunal*, *Svenska Kuriren*, and *NYA Osterns Weckoblad*.³⁵

Another important area of the association's work was the establishment of various clubs. Easily the most popular was the Boat Club, organized in November of 1904. In the spring of 1905, the members assiduously built a boathouse on the east side of the Otter Creek, just



PROCTOR Y.M.C.A. BROCHURE 1906-1907

One of the reading rooms. Note the fireplace on the right.



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The boathouse built by the Boat Club in the spring of 1905. It was located on the east side of the Otter Creek just south of the wooden bridge that was to be replaced by the Marble Bridge.

south of the Marble Bridge, to accommodate ten canoes. The initiation fee for membership was \$2.50 plus monthly dues of 50 cents. Within a year the members increased to a point where the boathouse was expanded to accommodate 20 canoes and four boats. Lockers were built in the house and electric lighting was installed. Another popular club was the camera club that was formed in 1904. A kitchen on the second floor was used as a darkroom.³⁶

In the realm of spiritual work the Proctor Y.M.C.A. never tried any aggressive promotion of religion because the feeling was that the town's five churches adequately provided for the spiritual welfare of its residents.³⁷ However, some religious activity was part of the association's program. At one time it held regular Sunday afternoon meetings for men and occasional ones for boys. The men's Bible class was a self-governing group of 25 that met Sunday noon. At the end of the course they took exams and practiced their Christianity by doing social and welfare work in the town. In 1913, the group undertook the study of the Second Period of the Galilean Ministry from *Studies in the Life of Christ* by Sharman, an impressive project to say the least. The Bible class for high school boys met on Sunday afternoon and in 1913 studied *Life Questions of School Boys* by Jenks. The 13 boys also undertook examinations at the end of their course.³⁸

Town boys participated in the Boy Scouts through the association. In all, some 18 boys enrolled in the first troop in March 1911. By 1913, 25 members representing five nationalities were scouts,³⁹ and the troop could boast of having the first two boys in the State of Vermont to become First Class Scouts.⁴⁰

The entire community benefited from the work of the physical committee that raised money to keep Beaver Pond cleared for skating all winter and also to string electric lights around it. The physical committee also sponsored two ice carnivals. Each was enthusiastically received by the townspeople.⁴¹ The first was held on Christmas Day in 1912 with over 500 people in attendance. The Proctor Brass Band furnished the music and refreshments were served. The second event outdid the first as it included a grand march and fireworks in the day's activities.⁴²

Another area of the association's work was to provide housing for transients. A single room and bed on the top floor of the building was for transient use at 25 cents per night or one dollar per week. It was run for the accommodation of members of the Y.M.C.A. or their guests. The other two rooms on the top floor were rented out to members for a fee of four dollars per bed monthly. In each of these rooms were two single beds and two closets. The rooms were steam heated and had

electric lights. A toilet and washroom were conveniently located on the same floor.⁴³

Despite its many activities and large membership the "Y" was strictly run. Pool playing at one point was a thorn in the sides of the Directors. In an early pamphlet the Board of Directors officially voiced its disapproval of "...rough conduct, loud talking, whistling, smoking, wearing of hats..." while playing pool. "...In fact any manner of conduct not gentlemanly in every way is strictly prohibited." If a member adhered to the preceding list of "don't's" the Directors believed that pool could be a dandy game void of the bad influence that they feared normally surrounded it.⁴⁴

The association was primarily concerned with maintaining good moral character. If censuring the men for ill conduct would result in better behavior, the association was prepared to do just that. It did heave a sigh of relief that Proctor had "...no saloons, cheap theatres or dives to attract its young men..." but was concerned with providing a proper social setting, especially for those young men who were away from home and boarding with other families.⁴⁵

When the Board of Directors decided to purchase equipment to show moving pictures in 1909,⁴⁶ particular attention was paid to procuring films of an educational character and ones that provided good, clean entertainment to suit the tastes of the general public.⁴⁷ Because of the lack of space for the proper projection of the films, they were shown in the Town Hall next door to the Proctor Y.M.C.A. building.

Other groups also used the Proctor "Y" building for their meetings. The town band, the hospital board, the road commissioners, and the glee club met regularly in one of the rooms. The Swedish Church also held a confirmation class in one of the classrooms.⁴⁸

By its tenth anniversary it was clear that the Proctor Y.M.C.A. was in every way a success even though it had seen three general secretaries in that same period. On 5 February 1913, the Association celebrated its birthday by inviting the town for free entertainment and refreshments. Movies and music were presented to over 600 people at the Town Hall. Four hundred people participated in games, listened to music and enjoyed refreshments. An exhibit of educational work, which included architectural and mechanical drawing, clay models, crayon portraits, posters, landscapes and other products of the free hand drawing class, was organized to show the townspeople some of the projects that had been completed by the students enrolled in the education classes.⁴⁹

As the hundreds of people enjoyed the evening's festivities, it would be hard to entertain the thought that within a little more than six

years the Proctor Y.M.C.A. would change its philosophy and disassociate itself from its mother organization. Indeed, in 1919 when the decision was made to change the Proctor "Y" to the Sutherland Club, the association was still serving a useful purpose in meeting the needs of many young men. However, it was the general feeling that a greater number of people could be served under a broader code.⁵⁰

Although the young men of Catholic faith in and around Proctor were eligible to use the "Y"'s facilities if they paid the membership fees, the Bishop of the Diocese, Bishop Rice, gravely frowned upon the Catholic populace of Proctor affiliating itself with an organization that had a religious tie outside of the Catholic Church. Consequently few Catholic men went to the "Y". The priest at St. Dominic's Church called a meeting in the spring of 1919 to discuss the possibility of forming a similar club for Catholics.⁵¹

By then, many soldiers had returned from World War I. These veterans were anxious for some social life and wished to use the facilities that the "Y" offered. Father Crosby approached the Vermont Marble Company officials and it was soon determined that as of 1 May 1919, an organization to be known as the Sutherland Club would be in existence.⁵² This club was to have no religious affiliation and was to be more of a social and athletic club than anything else. Instead of a general secretary, a manager would be in charge of the operation. Little was changed save for the name and for the fact that several young Catholic men hurried to the club to register their membership.

The transition from Y.M.C.A. to Sutherland Club was made with little notice and the club prepared for what would prove to be its busiest years: the 1920s. During that decade much activity was centered in the marble and wood building known as the Sutherland Club.

The club's membership committee started a drive in an attempt to boost membership. The committee was successful for a while and managed to increase the club's size to 450 members. However, a year later many had failed to keep up their dues and the total was down to 280.⁵³ There were different types of memberships also. Limited membership was \$3.00 per year and allowed the male adult all privileges except for the gymnasium. Unlimited membership was \$4.00 and admitted members to all privileges of the club. A junior membership was \$1.00, a sustaining membership was \$10.00, and a contributing membership, \$25.00.⁵⁴ Throughout its history the officers of the club worked diligently but unsuccessfully to keep up the membership.

The club was open from 9:00 A.M. to 9:30 P.M. on weekdays and on Sundays from 2:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M., but on Sundays only the reading, writing, and social rooms were open. A manager, under the direction of the Board of Directors, ran the club. The board was appointed by the

Vermont Marble Company. Five Directors were appointed to serve for three years.⁵⁵ The President of the Board appointed members to serve on standing committees that assisted and advised the manager. The standing committees were: house, membership, education, entertainment, social, boys' work, and physical work.⁵⁶

During the early 1920s the education committee endeavored to fulfill the perceived needs of the residents of Proctor. Fewer and smaller classes in English were given as the influx of immigrants leveled off and then subsided. A class of 12 people met Monday and Thursday evenings in 1921 to study English. Another group of about six men met Monday evenings, under the guidance of Mr. Paul Higbee, to prepare for the second and final test for citizenship.⁵⁷ The group studied faithfully and even received a visit from an examiner from the Naturalization Office in Boston.⁵⁸

The education committee arranged two series of talks in 1920 and tried to spur interest in a debating club.⁵⁹ It also arranged for Dr. Hack, a town physician, to demonstrate artificial respiration for first aid.⁶⁰

Likewise energized, the entertainment committee went to work to provide clean fun for Proctor. Two motion pictures were shown at the Town Hall each week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, with one or two education reels in each program.⁶¹ Saturday evening serials were also run for the entertainment of all.⁶² In addition, on Saturdays one could view Pathe News and Pathe Review.⁶³ In 1920, a new projector was purchased and installed in order to show the latest releases.⁶⁴ The audience sitting in the Town Hall listened to the piano providing mood music as they viewed such classics as: "Loves of Letty" starring Pauline Frederick; "Water, Water Everywhere" with everybody's favorite, Will Rogers; "When the Clouds Roll By", featuring America's number one actor, Douglas Fairbanks; and "Dollars and Sense" with Madge Kennedy.⁶⁵

Sometimes guests, sponsored by other civic organizations, spoke at the movies. Author Beth Gilchrist spoke to mothers and daughters at a Saturday evening motion picture show as part of a program.⁶⁶ Under the auspices of the Village Council, Father Griffin from Wallingford also spoke at the movies on "Civic Pride".⁶⁷

Not everyone behaved during the movie shows. Sometimes children and teenagers created a disturbance and as a result, parents were asked to either sit with their children or insist that their children behave while attending the cinema.⁶⁸

On the nights when no features were being shown, one could always listen to phonograph records in the clubrooms. The Victrola received quite a workout. The 125 records were divided into four sets with one placed in use at a time in order to insure greater longevity.⁶⁹

Besides the movies and the Victrola the entertainment committee organized minstrel shows and vaudeville acts.⁷⁰ From time to time the committee also sponsored plays, the proceeds of which were turned over to the club. In 1925, members of the club, assisted by some lady friends, presented "It Pays to Advertise." The play realized more than \$200.00 and the Vermont Marble Company added 200% to the Club's profit.⁷¹

Some club members provided their own entertainment: cards. Ultimately, the five-cent card game was prohibited at the club. This was partly because it was considered gambling and therefore illegal and partly because it was felt that it kept away some members.⁷² In a letter to club members, Manager Ray Strain not only commented on the five-cent card game, but also noted that the use of profanity kept members away from the club.⁷³

The boys' work committee became involved in scouting and other programs. New members were welcomed to the scout troop only if they dedicated themselves to the policy of being quality scouts.⁷⁴ A gym class was run for local youths. Various activities were offered including track events and gymnastics.⁷⁵

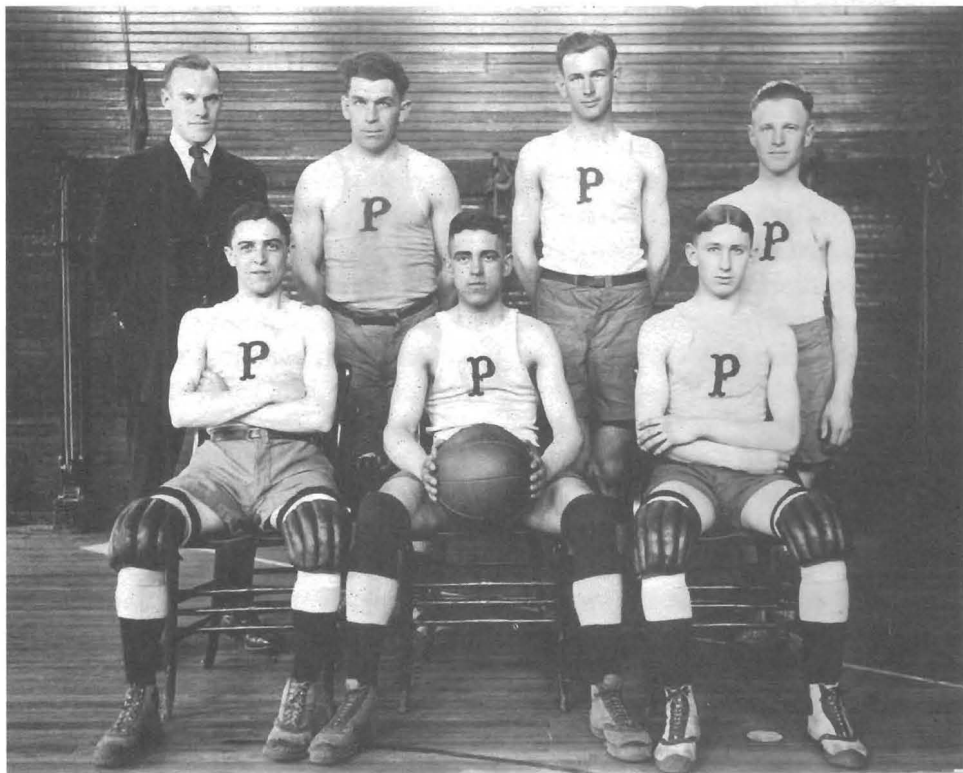
The social committee was active as well. During the 1920s it organized open houses and other functions. On election night in 1920, the committee sponsored a fall reception. Election returns were received and posted in the gym while an orchestra played for dancers until midnight. Games and refreshments were on the house that evening for the 250 people in attendance.⁷⁶

Perhaps the busiest and most popular standing committee was the physical work committee. The sports-minded citizenry fully supported the multi-faceted program set up under the auspices of this committee. The rifle range, dismantled during World War I, was put back into commission and a rifle club consisting of 25 members was set up and affiliated with the National Rifle Association of America.⁷⁷ This group had competitions with other rifle teams in the area. In all, there were two indoor ranges at the regulation twenty-five yards.⁷⁸

The senior gym class met occasionally but was not very popular. Bowling was available as well as pool for those who wished to spend an evening at the club. The young men, however, focused their attention on basketball and baseball. Intramural leagues were organized and each team was given a name. In 1920, the teams were named after motorcars: Fords, Hupps, Pierce Arrows, and Metztes.⁷⁹ The following year they were given names of animals.⁸⁰ From these squads came the Sutherland Club team that represented the club in outside competition. Henry A. Collin, president of the Club in 1926, wrote that the creation of the Otter Valley Baseball League provided an "excellent

means for promoting a friendly feeling between various towns" and instilled "the spirit of true sportsmanship and amateurism among the players."⁸¹

Many people enjoyed watching basketball games and soon it became evident that too few fans could view the games in the club's gymnasium. In 1921 the town fathers allowed the athletic association to refit the town hall for basketball. The association screened the windows, set up backboards and baskets and marked the floor. As a result of this move, 200 spectators could cheer on the Sutherland Club.⁸²



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The basketball team inside the Sutherland Club in the early 1920s. (l. to r.) Back row: Henry Collin, Albert Oberg, Herbert Johnson, Charles Keeffe; Front Row: Louis Lertola, "Bud" Howard and Herman Ball.

Many talented athletes played for the orange and black of the Sutherland Club. Several received an emblem sweater emblazoned with the newly adopted insignia. The first to be recognized with the emblem sweater were the 11 members of the 1926 baseball team.⁸³

Another committee important to the club's operation was the house committee. The club was generally run by this committee which was in

charge of records of attendance, furnishings, repairs and general maintenance. In 1926 it opened a lunchroom at the club. Frank Stall was hired to run the small cafeteria that served lunches in the assembly room on the second floor in the evenings during the winter months. Many members enjoyed a snack after a few hours of bowling, pool or basketball.⁸⁴

Once a week during the evening the house committee also opened its doors to the ladies, but they did not patronize the club to any large extent and the practice was dropped. The committee did continue to allow the schoolgirls to use the building on Tuesday afternoons.⁸⁵ A popular offering for ladies was the golf practice room on the second floor. Ladies were permitted use of the room for an annual fee of one dollar. A comment appeared in a club letter that it was desirable if women would "confine their times to morning and afternoon" but no restrictions were made in regard to this.⁸⁶

In the meantime, the 1920s were quickly coming to a close and things would never really be the same for the club. The Depression and World War II waited in the wings. The waning of the club was at hand as a new lifestyle slowly emerged for the citizens of Proctor.

In 1930 the club building was 27 years old and was beginning to show its age. Over the years thousands of people had amused themselves within the clubrooms and as a result, it was getting shabby. The curtains were so old that the club manager feared that they could not stand the risk of a thorough cleaning. Many of the magazines were old and in poor condition. The lockers were "unsanitary, unsightly and unsafe" according to Manager Ray Strain, who was embarrassed to ask a fee for their use.⁸⁷

Many men used to join the club merely for the privilege of the shower room but it was too old and inefficient due to the corrosion of the steam pipe leading to and through the hot water tank. The heater used for hot showers during the summer months was too small to handle the demand placed upon it. As a result, many men who habitually took baths and showers at the club were turned away due to the lack of hot water.⁸⁸ In 1925, \$197.35 was earned from the baths. In 1931 the amount was \$74.35 and in 1936 it was \$33.35. The decline could be attributed to the poor condition of the facilities but also to the poor economic situation in the country. No matter the cause, the decline was a fact.

The Depression resulted in a general dip in dues. Although membership fluctuated throughout the 1920s the situation worsened in the following decade. From 1930 to 1931 the club lost 51 members due mainly to the scarcity of money. Manager Strain reported that some men were using the club facilities with the promise to pay as

soon as financial conditions improved. Many Proctor men, however, were forced to let their memberships lapse and discontinued using the club's facilities. The junior memberships did not suffer as drastically because many of the boys, ranging in age from 12 to 16, earned their membership rights by setting pins in the bowling alleys.⁸⁹

By 1934 membership in the club was listed at 169. Of this number only 120 were seniors. Many young men who had been frequent visitors to the club were in C.C.C. camps and, therefore, unable to use the club's facilities.⁹⁰ This drastic decline in membership had a deleterious effect on programs. Revenues from bowling and pool suffered severely. To combat this situation, members were allowed to use these facilities at a reduced rate of 50%. At times the club offered free bowling and pool, especially during the winter months when there was little to do. Although this action cut down the revenue for the year, it did allow Proctor's young men to have some form of recreation.⁹¹

The tennis courts also lost the support of the citizens during the 1930s. Several thousand dollars had been spent on the courts. Although they were maintained in good condition during the playing season, they never paid their way.⁹² Ultimately, in 1934 the tennis courts were discontinued because of the large maintenance cost.⁹³

Every aspect of the club's work appeared to be affected during these hard times. The entertainments sponsored by the club were sparsely attended. The dances netted little profit due to outside competition. Many members preferred to take their dates out of town instead of escorting them to a Sutherland Club dance. Manager Strain took Proctor residents to task for what he considered to be their lack of support for club projects. He believed that Proctorians were spoiled because they always assumed that the Vermont Marble Company would "foot the bill" for any deficit.⁹⁴

A similar sentiment had been expressed in 1926 when Henry A. Collin noted in the president's report that: "We have so many charitable people in town, that the young men have grown up with a tendency of standing by expecting things to be done for them. We should endeavor to create in our members more of a spirit of initiative and independence and impress upon them that the more they do for the club, the more will the club be able to do in return."⁹⁵

Those people who could afford some type of entertainment during these years preferred to go to Rutland or to the lakes. The widespread adoption of the automobile had a serious effect on club attendance. Proctor citizens had a greater mobility than they had ever experienced. Those who had cars could take a short trip to one of the area lakes rather than to go to Beaver Pond for a Sunday picnic. If Proctorians didn't like the feature playing at the town hall they could get in their

cars and go to Rutland to see a movie. Many now owned their own Victrolas and radios and didn't need to go to the club to use those facilities. Young people now had a larger choice in selecting their entertainment and, unfortunately, the Sutherland Club suffered as a result.

The club was undergoing a slow death in the 1930s and the situation would only worsen in the 1940s. Many of the men enlisted or were drafted into the armed forces during the Second World War. It was this group that had patronized the club to a great extent. Their absence from Proctor caused a serious decline in membership. In 1943 there were only 30 seniors and a total of 117 members.⁹⁶

In June of 1943 Amasa Lumbra sent a letter to Mortimer Proctor indicating that there were not sufficient funds to pay the manager and the current bills at the end of the month. Again in December of the same year Lumbra was forced to inform Mr. Proctor that the club had a deficit of \$1,183.24. He suggested an appropriation of \$2,000 from the Vermont Marble Company to pay the debt since there was only \$220.95 in the checking account. The rest of the money would be used to keep the club in operation.⁹⁷

In January of 1944 the Board of Directors sent out a questionnaire to the community to get some input relative to programs but at this point the club was all but bankrupt. Mortimer Proctor's letter of 17 February 1944 informed the Board of Directors that they were relieved of further responsibility for the club.⁹⁸

The Sutherland Club then underwent yet another change. This time its name was altered to the Sutherland Community Center. Women and girls were allowed to join and were actively encouraged to do so. Miss Beatrice Pearson was hired as the recreation supervisor and operated the center. There was a housewarming held on 5 October 1944 to show off the newly painted facility. Townspeople danced to the Burns Martin Orchestra, played games and took a tour of the building.⁹⁹

The people who ran this operation worked very hard to make it into a purposeful center and to encourage as many as possible to take advantage of the opportunities the center offered. They issued a newsletter called *The Link* that informed Proctorians of past and future activities at the center. A "woman's day" was organized as well. Among the activities were crafts, gym work, rug making, sewing, bridge, bowling, and ping-pong.¹⁰⁰

When World War II ended and veterans returned home, the center organized a 21 to 35 club to provide them an opportunity to meet local girls but it soon was opened up to anyone in that age bracket. At one point there were 150 names on the mailing list. Participants met

bimonthly in the winter to enjoy conversation and a cafeteria supper as well as programs that included dancing, games and bowling.¹⁰¹

Despite these efforts the community center did not prosper. The circumstances that had allowed the Y.M.C.A. and the Sutherland Club to flourish were no longer present. People had access to other types of recreation. The Vermont Marble Company, however, faithfully continued its support of the center. In 1949 the treasurer of the Board of Managers, Frederick W. Raymond, wrote a letter to the board indicating that the company's contribution of over \$8,000 that year was more than it was fair to expect and that they should try to figure out some way to make the center less dependent upon this sizeable amount.¹⁰² Frequent attempts were made to find the right program. Everyone wanted the center to continue but not everyone was willing to patronize it to insure its future. As the 1940s ended it was becoming increasingly evident that the future of the center looked very grim.

Many townspeople had fond memories of the center and hated to think that it would be closed; however, they also realized that the social habits of the citizens had changed considerably in the past 20 years as a result of automobiles, radios and televisions. A feeling of "let's keep the center as long as we can" was generated among the people but no one could arrive at any cure for its ills.¹⁰³

Clearly things were not going well for the center. It appears that about this time members were complaining about the fact that the Board of Managers was appointed by the Vermont Marble Company. In response to this concern, Earl C. Richardson, the Chairman of the Board of Managers, wrote to the membership informing them that three of the five managers would be elected by the members for terms of one, two and three years. The company would appoint the other two members for a total of five.¹⁰⁴

That move did not seem to instill new life into the center. At a regular meeting of the Board of Managers it was noted that despite notices placed in *The Marble Chips* and in the *Rutland Herald* for new program interests there had been no response. Undaunted, the board decided to send out a questionnaire. The minutes indicated that if ideas were not forthcoming, members would have only themselves to blame.¹⁰⁵

Other actions of a more serious nature were also taken during this period. At the April meeting of the Board of Managers in 1951 it was decided to ask for Superintendent Smith's resignation, citing the way in which the center was being managed and that a lack of harmony and cooperation was hindering the program.¹⁰⁶ This finger pointing seems to have been one of the last desperate acts of a dying organization.

The 1950 membership roster listed 300 people. Among them were: 33 junior high school students, 56 senior high school students, 47 adult women, 142 adult men, and 22 contributing members. It was sadly noted that at the annual meeting in the fall of 1951 only 19 adult members were in attendance.¹⁰⁷

By this time the Vermont Marble Company had decided that it would continue to support the center by paying salaries, assuming the costs for repairs, heat and electricity but that the membership would have to provide finances for activities and equipment.¹⁰⁸

Ultimately, in 1953 at a Village Meeting, the residents voted down a \$5,000 appropriation to maintain the facility. It was clearly understood that such an action would result in the closing down of the center by the Vermont Marble Company. The end had come. In that year the doors of the center were closed and the building was left vacant except for its occasional use for a blood drawing, a Halloween party, or a Vermont Marble Company function.

Finally the Vermont National Guard and the Fortieth Army Band rented the facility from the company for their headquarters. These two agencies remained in the building for several years until the Fortieth Army Band transferred its headquarters to Burlington in the early 1960s and the National Guard unit moved to the Rutland Armory. The building was then unoccupied for several years until the Proctor Trust Company rented it and remodeled it. Consequently the building received an interior facelift. When the Vermont Marble Company was sold to OMYA, the firm moved its laboratory to the building and it continues to use this facility for that purpose to this day.

Rockwell's structure has now seen its 100th birthday, an event that went uncelebrated by those who live in Proctor or by those who own the building. Indeed, there are few residents who even know that the building was once the center of social activity in Proctor. The immigrants who learned English, the boys who participated in basketball, gymnastics, and other sports, the company workers who bowled in leagues, and most of the men who enjoyed the other benefits offered by the Sutherland Club now lie under marble monuments in cemeteries. Like characters in a Thornton Wilder play, they and the Sutherland Club typified what life was like in "Our Town" during those 50 years.

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